



Article I – Purpose

The Modest Means Panel is a facet of the Lawyer Referral and Information Service that is specially structured to improve the availability of lawyers to those of moderate income.

Article II – Governance

- A. The Modest Means Panel will be operated under the general supervision and control of the Lawyer Referral and Information Committee of the State Bar.

Article III – Conditions of Referral Panel Membership

- A. State Bar members in good standing shall be eligible to register for the Modest Means Panel. Modest Means Panel members are not required to be members of LRIS.
- B. Panel members must be engaged in the private practice of law on a full time basis and must maintain a law office suitable for reception of clients during normal business hours.
- C. Panel members are entitled to all of the benefits provided by the State Bar of Wisconsin to other pro bono volunteers, including malpractice insurance coverage under the State Bar Pro Bono program.
- D. A panel member may elect to accept referrals in any field of law in which the member considers himself or herself competent, consistent with Wisconsin Supreme Court Rules of Professional Conduct for Attorneys.
- E. Fee disputes with referral clients shall be submitted to an appropriate Bar association fee arbitration program for resolution, if requested by the client.
- F. Panel members may not unreasonably refuse to accept a matter referred by the Modest Means Panel. Panel members must be willing to enter into alternative fee arrangements that reflect the client's very limited financial resources and inability obtain legal services at market rates. Alternative payment arrangements may consist of gratuitous services; a reduction in the panel members' normal hourly rate, flat fee, advanced fee deposit; a reasonable payment plan; or any combination of these alternatives.
- G. Panel members are encouraged to provide an initial consultation to the client at no or only nominal cost. If it appears further assistance will be required, and the panel member is willing to provide that assistance, the panel member shall advise the referral client of how charges for additional professional services will be determined and may be paid prior to providing such further assistance. Although there is no set fee schedule, panel members are encouraged to consider substantial reductions in their normal hourly fees, reduced or waived advanced fees, extended payment schedules and arrangements that cap the cost of the lawyers services for the matter at a level acceptable to both the attorney and the client.
- H. If, in the Committee's opinion, there is reasonable cause to believe a panel member has violated Modest Means Panel Rules, policies or regulations, the committee shall hold a hearing upon due notice to the member. If, upon hearing, it is determined that there is such a violation, the Committee may remove the member from the Panel or take such lesser action as it deems appropriate.
- I. Upon receiving confirmation that a complaint has been filed against any member of the Modest Means Referral Panel in a Court of record or that a grievance has been lodged against any member of the panel before a referee appointed by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, the Committee may elect to suspend such membership during the pendency of such complaint, providing that a hearing is held after notice. If such suspended member's right to practice law is in no way impaired upon termination of a proceeding involving the complaint, such member shall be reinstated.
- J. There is no fee for being a Modest Means Panel Member, and all fees collected from referrals made under the Modest Means Panel program are exempt from LRIS charges.
- K. Modest Means Panel Members shall comply with all reporting requirements imposed by the LRIS, including but not limited to the submission of quarterly case status reports within the time specified and upon the forms provided by LRIS. Any panel member who fails to comply with such reporting requirements may be suspended upon ten days written notice but without hearing, at the discretion of the LRIS Committee or its designee.
- L. Representation provided through the Modest Means Panel program constitutes pro bono legal services for persons of limited means, within the meaning of SCR 20:6.1.

Article IV – LRIS Operations

- A. Day to day Modest Means Panel operations shall be under the general supervision and direction of the State Bar Lawyer Referral and Information Services Manager.
- B. Referrals to panel members shall be made on an impartial, rotation, county-by-county basis.
- C. The LRIS Committee shall establish eligibility standards for persons seeking a referral to an attorney participating in the Modest Means Panel.

Article V – Rule Amendments

Amendment of these Rules requires approval of the LRIS Committee.